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DEPARTMENT FOR G/IWI AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: PANAMA: NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMAN OF
COURAGE AWARD

REF: STATE 12871

11. (U) Per reftel instructions, Embassy Panama is pleased to nominate Angelica Maytin for the Secretary of State's Award for International Women of Courage (IWOC).

12. (SBU) Biographical information and justification statement for Ms. Maytin follow:

Name: Angelica Maytin Justiniani
Title: Executive Director
Institution: Transparency International Panama chapter-
Fundacion para el Desarrollo de la Libertad Ciudadana
(Foundation for the Development of Civic Freedom)
Contact information: 507-223-4120

13. (U) Angelica Maytin rates is Panama's foremost advocate for transparency and good governance in Panama. In a country where corruption consistently rates among the public's top concerns, Maytin's efforts are pivotal in raising public consciousness of corruption and encouraging civil society to fight for transparency.

14. (U) Maytin has worked for most of her adult life to improve good governance in Panama. She started working for the Panama branch of Transparency International as a volunteer in 1996 and now serves as Executive Director of the chapter. Besides her work with Transparency International, Maytin participated in numerous regional, governmental, and non-governmental programs that emphasize transparency and human rights. These endeavors include serving as a judge for labor issues with the Panama Canal Authority, monitoring the 2006 Canal expansion referendum, and contributing to the Organization of American States' proposals to Panama as part of the InterAmerican Convention against Corruption. Maytin has also served as a consultant for USAID, the UN Development Program, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

15. (U) When President Torrijos formed the 10-member National Transparency Council in 2005 as part of his anti-corruption platform, Maytin was an obvious choice for inclusion. However, in September 2006 Maytin took the bold step of resigning from the Council to protest the Council's "ineffectiveness" and lack of action. By walking away -- despite significant pressure from the Torrijos Administration to remain on the Council -- Maytin sent a strong signal to the public and the government that the GOP's anti-corruption efforts were not advancing as expected; we concur with her assessment. Since her resignation, Maytin continues to be an active voice for transparency, calling on the GOP to make good on its anti-corruption pledges and urging the public to take a stand on demanding good governance.

16. (U) Maytin's tireless efforts on behalf of transparency

and good governance demonstrate "outstanding courage and leadership." Through the work of Maytin and her fellow activists, the fight against corruption has taken hold in the public consciousness. Corruption is no longer accepted by the Panamanian people as a normal government practice. For her efforts on behalf of transparency, good governance, and democracy, we are happy to nominate Angelica Maytin as an International Woman of Courage.

¶7. (U) Embassy Panama's officer following women's issues is Carrie Lee. She can be reached at 507-207-7131 or via email at LeeCK2@state.gov.

Arreaga